

CLAIMS

1. A file cabinet having a housing and one or more file drawers and a means for mechanically locking said one or more file drawers, said means for mechanical locking being movable between an unlocked position and a locked position, the file cabinet comprising a biometric data scanner, a computer processor capable of storing sets of biometric data, and operatively coupled to said biometric scanner to enable comparisons to be made between scanned sets of biometric data and stored sets of biometric data, an actuator operatively coupled to said processor and to said mechanical locking means, whereby when said biometric data scanner scans a set of biometric data that corresponds to a previously stored set of biometric data, the computer processor causes the actuator to move the locking mechanism from a locked position to an unlocked position for period of time of predetermine duration, to allow access to the file cabinet.
2. The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said lock mechanism further comprises a substantially vertically disposed lock bar movable between a lower locking position and a raised unlocking position when the fingerprint scanner reads the fingerprint of an authorized user.
3. The file cabinet of claims 2 wherein said actuator comprises a solenoid operatively coupled to said lock bar.
4. The file cabinet of claim 3 wherein said period of time wherein said lock bar is in the unlocked position is on the order of about 10 seconds or less.
5. The file cabinet of claim 1 wherein said lock mechanism further comprises a substantially horizontally disposed lock bar movable between a lower locking position and a raised

unlocking position when the fingerprint scanner reads the fingerprint of an authorized user.

6. The file cabinet of claims 5 wherein said actuator comprises a motor-driven cam operatively coupled to said lock bar to raise said bar to the unlocked position.